

European and External Affairs Committee

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Update on Committee of the Regions activities of National Assembly for Wales' representatives

Introduction

1. This paper has been prepared as an update for the European and External Affairs Committee's ("the Committee") meeting on 21 September 2010. It follows on from the updates to the Committee of 29 September 2009, 28 April 2009 and 12 January 2010.

New mandate for 2010-2015

2. Christine Chapman AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM were formally appointed to the Committee of the Regions on 26 January 2010, with a five-year mandate, Christine as a full member and Rhodri Glyn as the alternate.

3. Each full member of the CoR is entitled to sit on two "Commissions", i.e. "Committees", in the CoR, although in practice membership of the two Commissions is split between the two representatives from the Assembly as follows:

Economic and Social Committee: Christine Chapman AM

Natural Resources Commission (including agriculture, rural development, GMOs, biodiversity): Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Activities since January 2010

4. At the June plenary of the CoR Christine Chapman was formally appointed as one of two political co-ordinators of the Europe 2020 monitoring platform. In this role Christine will be responsible for providing a political steer on the work of the platform in regard to the social and economic dimensions of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The other political co-ordinator is Mr Nichi Vendola, the President of the Puglia Region of Italy. The first stage in this process is the preparation of the work programme and strategic direction of the new platform, which is expected to be adopted at the meeting of the CoR Bureau on 4 October, a meeting that Christine Chapman will attend.

5. On 5 October in her capacity as co-ordinator of the Europe 2020 platform, Christine will chair a conference focusing on regional research and innovation, during the annual Open Days of Cities and Regions which is co-organised by the CoR and DG Regional Policy. In November Christine has been invited to participate in an "audition" organised by the Economic and Social Committee on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

6. In addition to the above and as a direct follow on from the own-initiative report on the future of the Lisbon Strategy, Christine Chapman has also spoken at a number of conferences in Brussels and elsewhere in Europe, as the voice of the Committee of the Regions in discussions on the preparation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. For example, she was a keynote speaker and/or panellist at the following events:

Territorial Dialogue held in Mallorca on 18 January

European Summit of Local Government held in Barcelona on 22 February

Regions for Economic Change conference in Brussels on 20 May

7. Rhodri Glyn Thomas has attended three plenary sessions (February, April and June), three meetings of the Natural Resources Commission (February, March and May), and substituted for Christine Chapman at two meetings of the ECOS Commission (February and September).

8. At the April plenary Rhodri Glyn spoke on behalf of his political group in response to the speech by the Agriculture Commissioner, Dacian Cioloş, on the future of CAP. During his intervention Rhodri Glyn referred to the work of the Assembly's Rural Development Sub-Committee in this area.

9. For the June plenary Rhodri Glyn prepared a number of amendments to the CoR opinion on the future of CAP, which were submitted through his political group.

10. The reports by the Rural Development Sub-Committee on the Uplands in Wales and the future of CAP were both profiled by the CoR press service on their web-site, which is a direct result of Rhodri Glyn being a member of CoR. Similarly, the CoR will provide coverage of the visit by Rhodri Glyn, together with members of the Rural Development Sub-Committee, on 15-16 September, which will focus on the future of CAP and proposed changes to the rules on the cultivation of GMOs in the EU. The visit includes meetings with the Chair of the European Parliament Agriculture Committee, Mr Paolo de Castro MEP, the head of Commissioner Cioloş' Cabinet, Mr Georg Haessler, and the Welsh MEPs.

11. Rhodri Glyn is a member of the CoR cross-party Working Group on the future of the EU Budget, which will meet during the autumn,

although the exact timings remain to be confirmed.

Team Wales

12. All four representatives from Wales on the CoR, including the two Welsh Local Government Representatives, continue to take a team Wales approach to their CoR work, and meet informally during CoR plenary sessions and when they are in Brussels on the same occasion. The recent appointment of Councillor Bob Bright as CoR rapporteur¹ is another example of a Welsh member taking an active role on the CoR, and is very much supported and welcomed by Christine and Rhodri Glyn.

13. Similarly the Welsh representatives welcome the open and inclusive approach of the Welsh MEPs, and look forward to working together to promote Welsh interests in Brussels for the remainder of the mandate.

Representing the National Assembly for Wales

14. The Committee is asked to note the contents of the paper, and to note the intention of Christine Chapman AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM to continue to work closely with the Committee during the new mandate of the Committee of the Regions to ensure that the Assembly's interests are represented effectively in Brussels, through partnership and co-operation with the other Welsh representatives on the CoR, Welsh MEPs, and Welsh stakeholders.

3 September 2010

1 Opinion on the European Commission's Communication "A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy" COM(2010) 296 final